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Converting Bruce

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BOSTON
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1919

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Converting Bruce

CHARACTERS

BRUCE HARRINGTON, *a young law student, who has no use for girls.*
JACK WEBSTER, *his roommate, who adores girls, especially one.*,
PEGGY LEE, *a college girl, Jack's cousin.*
BETH STUART, *Peggy's roommate, and incidentally Jack's adored
one.*



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Converting Bruce

SCENE.—*The living-room of the apartment occupied by PEGGY and BETH. It is a charming room, with many evidences of pretty feminine taste. A be-ribboned guitar lies on the couch; a string of dance programs dangle from the chandelier; on the table is an open work-basket, with a bit of fancy-work sticking out of it; a bright-hued bag hangs on the back of a chair.*

(At rise, BETH is discovered in an easy chair near table, reading and nibbling candy, an open box of which stands on the corner of the table near at hand. 'Phone rings.)

BETH (dropping book, and turning to table on which 'phone stands, takes down receiver). Hello!....Oh, Mr. Webster, is it? (She settles herself into her chair as if for a long conversation.) Good-evening....No, Peggy's out. She went over to the cottage to a committee meeting. Won't I do?....Oh, he is? When did he get back?Well, I suppose we shall not see you so often now.What! Bring him here! Why, will he come?....What! Oh, you sinner!....Yes....yes....Oh, what a splendid idea!....Why, of course he would if he ever saw her. But how....Oh, yes, do come. I'll help you plan it....Oh, you are? Then come right over now. Bye-bye. (She hangs up, then rushes round the room, straightening a pillow here, a drape there; sees a slipper on the floor and kicks it under the couch. The door-bell rings. She goes to speaking-tube and calls.) Hello! Oh, come right up, Mr. Webster.

(A moment later, enter JACK breezily.)

JACK. Good-evening, Be—oh, beg pardon, Miss Stuart.

BETH (*holding out her hand, laughingly, imitating his tone*). Good-evening, Ja—oh, beg pardon, Mr. Webster.

JACK (*taking her hand and holding it tight as he looks ardently into her face*). Well, you called me Mister through that (*nods toward speaking-tube*), and I thought —

BETH. (*withdrawing her hand, laughing still*). I thought you had come to make plans as to how you were going to get your woman-hating friend and roommate up here to meet us. To business, sir, to business! Make yourself comfy. (*She pulls out a big chair and shakes up the cushions. He sits, and she drops into her own chair.*) Now, then, out with your little plot!

JACK. You are a jewel to let me come and to promise to help; but the fact is, my plans are very hazy yet. All I've thought of is to pretend that this is the new apartment I've taken while he's been away, and so get him up here; and while he is here, you girls come in unexpectedly, and—well, I guess I can trust you and Peggy to do the rest.

BETH. Be-yoo-tiful! To be sure it *is* a new apartment, seeing that we have been in it only two weeks. But you dear blind thing, do you think any man would ever think it a *man's* apartment?

JACK (*glancing round*). By George, I never thought of that. (*Ruefully.*) That queers the whole thing. All these feminine do-dads will give the whole show away, and he'll cut and run the first thing. Oh, *shucks!*

BETH (*thoughtfully surveying the room*). Oh, I don't know about that. When's he coming?

JACK. This evening.

BETH. This *evening!*

JACK. Yes. (*Apologetically.*) Of course, I know it's awful cheek—but, you see, I *do* so want to wake the dear old boy up to a sense of his idiocy on the woman question. And there's nobody I know who can do it so well as you and Peggy. And this idea popped into my head all of a sudden, and—well, it had to be to-night or never, because to-morrow he'll know that I don't live here. So I told him to come straight here from Wigmore's lecture.

BETH. And what time will that be?

JACK. Between eight-thirty and nine.

BETH (*looking at her watch*). It's a quarter past eight now. (*She jumps up.*) Here, help me to set the stage! Put these things out of sight—in the table drawer, anywhere. (*She throws the fancy-work to him and the dance programs from the chandelier. She herself gathers up the work-basket, the bag, and a few extra feminine-looking drapes from different parts of the room and carries them into another room. Returns and studies the room.*) There! That looks a little less like a girl's room, but it still does not look very much like a man's.

JACK (*also surveying the room with a critical eye*). That's no dream! Well—things will just have to move quickly—too quickly for the dear old boy to know he's being strung. I'm relying an awful lot on you and Peggy, Beth.

BETH. And Peg won't fail you, you may be sure of that. But, what do you want *me* to do? Hadn't I better 'phone Peggy first and tell her what we are up to, so that she won't give the show away if she should happen not to arrive before he does?

JACK. Good idea! But wait—let me do it. (*Goes to 'phone, takes down receiver. Door-bell rings, three short rings. JACK hangs up receiver, hastily.*) Good Lord, there he comes! That's his ring. What shall we do?

BETH. Mercy! He mustn't find me here or that will queer the game. I'll go out the back way, and get Peggy, and we'll come back together. Buck up, Jack! Play the game—smoke—'phone—act natural, and trust in Providence. But for heaven's sake, *don't* let him get past this door, at least for the next ten minutes. Good-bye and good luck!

JACK. 'Phone! Good idea! He says I spend my life 'phoning, so that will seem perfectly natural. Here goes for an imaginary conversation. (*Takes down receiver, but keeps hand on 'phone. He hears BRUCE HARRINGTON enter but pays no attention. Talks on unconcernedly into 'phone.*) I just wanted to know if you were going to be home this evening.... You are? Good, then I'll run over

for a while if you don't mind....Yes, I'm in the new apartment....What?....Oh, yes, but it will look more so when we get more of our own things sprinkled round. The folks who had it before still have some of theirs here. It doesn't look *quite* like home, sweet home yet.Perhaps you and Peggy will help put it that way some day....You will? Thanks a lot. Well, then, you'll tell Peggy that I'll be over....Thank you and good-bye. (*Hangs up and swings round to face BRUCE.*) Hello, Bruce, old man, welcome home. How do you like it?

(*Makes a sweeping gesture to include the whole room.*)

BRUCE (*calmly surveying the room*). As you so ably remarked a moment ago, it doesn't look *exactly* like home, sweet home; but nothing could be *more* homelike than your pretty prattle on the 'phone. Making a date again, I suppose?

JACK. Good guess.

BRUCE. Same girl, I suppose?

JACK (*calmly*). Right again.

BRUCE. How many does that make this week?

JACK (*still calmly*). Oh, a baker's dozen, more or less.

BRUCE. And all with the same girl?

JACK (*virtuously*). Why, of course!

BRUCE (*dropping into a chair with a despairing sigh*). Well, there was safety in numbers.

JACK (*catching him up quickly*). Then come there with me this evening.

BRUCE. What, *me*? *Me* call on a girl? Not on your life! Not on *two* girls!

JACK. Well, you said there was safety in numbers, and there would be four of us.

BRUCE (*with infinite scorn*). *Four* of us! Ye-es! And you and your dear Miss What's-her-name would be off in the corner by yourselves and I'd be left to the tender mercies of Cousin Peggy. For I suppose that's where you're going.

JACK (*half indignantly*). That's just where I *am* going. And let me tell you this, you old grouch, Peggy's a peach.

BRUCE (*with a flip of his finger*). Pooh! Peggy's a girl. 'Nuff said.

JACK (*eyes him for a moment contemplatively*). Poor chap! Who was she, Bruce?

BRUCE. She?

JACK. Yes; the girl who threw you down so hard? You must have been awfully young and green, for it has not been since I've known you.

BRUCE (*reaching for a book under the table as if going to study*). Well, what if somebody did throw me over? What's that got to do with my going with you or not?

JACK. Why, you numbskull, all girls aren't alike! Why, I'll bet you all *that* (*draws a handful of money from his pocket and jingles it*)—and it's all I have till I get another welcome check from dad—that if you once saw Peggy I'd never be able to drag you away from here—from there, I mean.

BRUCE (*throwing the book down impatiently*). And I'll bet you'd lose your little all then. I never saw the girl yet that I'd leave my happy home for.

JACK. You never saw Peggy and—you never saw Peggy yet.

BRUCE (*with a half grin*). Well, even Peggy and are just girls,—sweet little dears, saying sweet little things before a fellow's face. But behind his back—well, that's another story.

JACK (*disgustedly*). Oh, you blithering idiot! (*He walks up and down the room a turn or two with impatient steps*.) See here, Bruce, you are too fine a fellow to get such pestiferous notions into your head. You —

BRUCE (*jumping to his feet*). Oh, you can't tell me! Don't I know 'em! Haven't I seen 'em? Why, most of 'em would enjoy talking to a deaf man just for the pleasure of saying mean things about 'em to the rest of the company while they shouted sweet things into his ear-trumpet!

JACK (*striding to the table, picks up a photo of the girls*). Here, look at this! It's a new one of Peggy and Miss Stuart. Do they look as if they'd say sweet things to a man's face and the other kind behind his back?

BRUCE (*taking the picture unwillingly*). Hm! It's not a case of all girls look alike to me—they just act alike, that's all.

(*But he continues to look at the picture as if he were not altogether averse to the task.*)

JACK (*after pacing the floor a few times excitedly*). Look here, Bruce, I believe I can convert you. Will you give me a chance?

BRUCE (*his eyes still on the picture*). Convert me? How?

JACK. Well, you come out with me this evening and call on Peggy —

BRUCE (*interrupting him with a sardonic grin*). Peggy and, don't you mean?

JACK. Oh, all right, then, Peggy and Miss Stuart, though I'm counting on Peggy to do the trick. Well, you come out with me, and I'll prove to you that not all girls are the contemptible little idiots you pretend you think they are.

BRUCE (*still looking at the picture*). What's your scheme?

JACK. Well, what you said about a girl talking to a deaf man gave me an idea. Now, if you'll be willing to — ('Phone rings.) Just a minute. Hello!... Yes, this is Jack.... Yes, he's here; do you want to see him, too? Oh-h-h, I see. Yes, you're right, that would be lots better. Where are you now?... First floor?... Well, wait a minute, I want to see you before you go.... Yes, right now. (*Hangs up.*) Say, Bruce, I've got to run down to the first floor a minute to see a—a fellow. I'll be back in a jiffy, and then I'll tell you my little plan.

[*Exit in a grand hurry.*

BRUCE. Hm! Wonder what "fellow" lives on the first floor? Voice sounded rather feminine over the 'phone. (*He wanders round the room, looking at pictures on the walls.*) Wonder why on earth Jack picked this place. Looks like a co-ed's hang-out more than a fellow's. (*He stubs his toe against the leg of the couch.*) Ouch! What's he got that darned couch sprawling across the middle of the room for! (*He swings the*

couch around, uncovering the slipper that BETH has kicked under when she "set the stage" for his entrance.) Hello! What's this? (He stoops and picks it up.) A girl's slipper. (Slips his hand into it.) And still warm, by George! (Stands looking at the slipper with a puzzled face. Again looks critically around the room; catches sight of something hanging out of the table drawer, goes swiftly across the room and opens the drawer; takes out the fancy-work that JACK has thrust in there. He holds it up and examines it, the slipper still in his other hand, then puts them both down on the table and, with hands in pockets, surveys them.) Well! Well! Now what are these things doing in the flat that my dear friend Webster says he has rented for us for the rest of the year? And what is my giddy young roommate trying to put over on me? There is surely some niggah in the woodpile somewhere. (JACK's voice is heard on the stairs. BRUCE hastily seizes the bag in which he carries his books and papers, slips the fancy-work and the slipper into it.) Well, whatever it is, I'm going to bite for once, just for the pleasure of telling about these things afterwards. (He drops the bag behind the couch.)

Enter JACK.

JACK. Say, Bruce, don't you want to walk down to the library with me? I've got to get a book for my eight o'clock recitation to-morrow.

BRUCE. Why, man alive, I've only just come from there!

JACK. I know you have. But just remember I haven't seen you for a whole two weeks. Come on, pardner! It's a peach of a night for a walk.

BRUCE. Oh, all right then. (Aside.) Plot thickens. No sooner gets me here than he wants to get me away.

JACK. Come on then, because you know I have a date for this evening, and if you fall for my little plan you'll have one, too.

(They take their hats and exeunt. The stage is empty for a second, then enter PEGGY. She comes in briskly, walks over to table and puts down note-

book and fountain pen, then takes off hat and carries it out of the room, calling "Beth" as she goes. Returns immediately.)

PEGGY. Wonder where she is? (*Looks round room.*) What's happened to this room?

Enter BETH.

BETH. Hello, Peggy, home again. (*Gazes round.*) Why, haven't they come yet?

PEGGY (*surprised*). They? Who's coming?

BETH. Oh, did I forget to tell you? Why, your cousin called up and said he was coming out this evening, and later he called again and said he was bringing his friend Mr. Harrington with him.

PEGGY. Harrington? Not Harrington the famous woman-hater, surely!

BETH (*shrugging her shoulders*). Search me! Jack—Mr. Webster said his friend Harrington. That's all I know.

PEGGY (*imitating her, teasingly*). "Jack—Mr. Webster." What's the use of putting on style with me, Beth? Don't you suppose I'm wise to what brings my dear cousin out here so often? And it's perfectly all right with me. I'll take you for a cousin-in-law any day. (*Rises slowly.*) Well, I guess I'll see what's in the ice-box. If Mr. Harrington shows signs of being bored by too much feminine society, we'll feed him. By way of tummy reach the heart, you know. [Exit.]

BETH (*calling after her*). Better make your famous shrimp wiggle, then; I'd bet on that as a short cut to any man's heart. (*She moves around, straightening things on the table, brings in all the things she had removed, humming softly the while. Picks up picture of JACK and gazes at it laughing.*) Jack, you villain, this plan is just like you! But I'd never let you try it, though, if she weren't the sweetest-tempered girl in the world. If she doesn't "convert Bruce" then he's positively hopeless. (*Door-bell rings.*) Ah, here they are. Peggy, oh Peggy, shall I go and let them in?

PEGGY (*within*). Why, of course not! Jack ought

to know his way up those stairs by this time. (*Enters.*) No shrimps, so I can't make a wiggle; but there's plenty of cheese and things for a rarebit. I'll make it. You'll probably be too busy.

BETH (*mischievously*). Perhaps you will have converted Mr. Harrington by that time, and he will be dying to help you.

PEGGY (*calmly*). Perhaps. You never can tell, as dear George Bernard says. As long as he doesn't die after eating my rarebit. (*Knock at door.*) Come in!

Enter JACK and BRUCE.

JACK (*briskly*). Good-evening, Peggy dear. Good-evening, Miss Stuart. Peggy, I want to introduce my friend and roommate, Bruce Harrington, and I want you to be awfully nice to him, for I've had a deuce of a time getting him here. (*Yells at BRUCE.*) My cousin, Miss Lee, Bruce—Miss Stuart.

PEGGY. Heavens, Jack! What a voice! (*Cordially holding out her hand.*) We've heard so much about you from Jack, Mr. Harrington. So glad you came.

BRUCE (*looking puzzled*). Rain? Oh, I think not this evening.

PEGGY. Rain? Why —

JACK (*hastily*). Oh, I forgot to tell you, Peggy, you'll have to shout when you talk to Bruce. He's as deaf as a post.

PEGGY. Deaf? Why, you never — Oh, you're joking!

JACK. Joking? What on earth should I joke for? Say something nice to the poor fellow quick, or he'll be going home. And that would be a howling shame after the time I had getting him here.

PEGGY (*staring at BRUCE open-mouthed*). Well, of all things! (*Raising her voice considerably.*) I'm glad you came with Jack.

BRUCE (*looking relieved*). Oh, you've heard my name from Jack. Yes, Jack and I have been friends for quite a long time.

(JACK and BETH show signs of great glee. BETH claps her hand over mouth to smother a laugh.)

PEGGY (*more amazed than ever, turning to JACK*). Good heavens! Jack, how loud must one speak so that he may hear?

JACK (*very seriously*). Oh, it's not so much *loud* talking that counts as it is the enunciation. If you speak very slowly and distinctly, and a *little* louder than you did just now, he'll hear you all right.

PEGGY (*resignedly*). Well, I'll do the best I can for as long as I can, but you'll have to help me out once in a while or my lungs will give out. (*During the foregoing speeches BRUCE has been gazing round the room in the abstract fashion of the deaf, while BETH, meeting his glance once and again, gives him a mischievous wink. Now, as all through the play, it must be made evident that PEGGY is the victim of a practical joke of which BETH is fully aware. PEGGY motions BRUCE to a seat near the table, picks up a photograph album.*) Are—you—interested—in—kodaks—Mr. Harrington?

BRUCE (*listening with strained attention*). Eh? What? Quacks? Oh, come now, Miss Lee, I'm studying law, not medicine!

(*Demonstration of delight on the part of JACK and BETH, who have retired to a divan in the rear of the room.*)

PEGGY (*in natural voice*). Oh, lor! (*Shouts.*) I—said—kodaks—these—(*points to book*), pictures—relics—of our—college—life.

BRUCE (*brightening up*). Oh, yes, I see. Record of all the stunts you and Miss—Miss ——

(*Manifestation of distress at not having remembered BETH'S name.*)

PEGGY (*yelling*). Beth Stuart.

BETH (*forgetting the game for a moment, springs to her feet in surprise*). Good gracious, Peg, what's the matter?

PEGGY (*calmly and in natural voice*). Nothing, my dear, nothing. I was just recalling your name to Mr. Harrington, that's all. (BETH subsides again. PEGGY points to a picture in the kodak album.) Those—are—some—of—the—boys—in—our—class. We—girls—just—swear by them.

BRUCE (*looking startled and shocked*). Girls swear! Oh, not you, surely!

PEGGY (*hearing a giggle behind her, turns and shakes her fist at the other two*). I said—we—swear by—by them.

BRUCE (*studying a picture*). Ah, the lake in a storm. That's pretty.

PEGGY (*enthusiastically, forgetting to raise her voice*). Oh, it's simply great on a stormy day. You ought to hear— (Suddenly remembering.) Oh, dear! (Yells.) I—just—love—to—hear—it—roar.

JACK (*applauding in rear*). Bravo, Peggy! That's what I call suiting the action to the word.

PEGGY (*over shoulder*). Oh, Jack, please don't tease! I'm awfully sorry for the poor fellow, but really you ought to have warned me. This is hard work. (To BRUCE again.) Do—you like—boating?

(*Vigorous knock at door. All but BRUCE jump up.*)

JACK. I'll go, Peggy.

BETH. Better let me.

PEGGY (*firmly*). You'll both stay where you are. I want a moment's rest. (To BRUCE, sweetly but vociferously.) Excuse me—one moment, please. [Exit.

BRUCE (*cautiously looking round, then jumping up and crossing to divan*). Say, Jack, we've got to cut this out. I feel like a sneak thief.

JACK. Oh, keep it up, old man, keep it up. You know you promised to give a fair chance to convert you, and I'm doing my part, per Peggy.

BRUCE. But she'll never forgive me.

BETH. Oh, yes, she will; Peggy's a dear. And, luckily, she admires good acting, and you certainly are great in your part, Mr. Harrington.

JACK. S-sh! Here she comes. (*Yells.*) Just remember that, old man.

PEGGY (*entering hurriedly*). S-h! S-sh! Oh, dear, excuse me, Jack! Beth, what do you think? (*Looks cautiously round at BRUCE, who is apparently absorbed in the album again.*) Mrs. Jones up-stairs has sent down to ask us to be quieter. She says we're keeping the baby awake!

BETH. Oh, what a joke!

PEGGY. Joke! Well, I'm glad you see it that way. I don't.

JACK. Well, Peggy, it wasn't we who were making the noise. (*Rising.*) Pshaw! I suppose this means I've got to take Harrington home; after all the hard work I had getting him here, too.

PEGGY (*with another cautious look at the still unconscious BRUCE*). Indeed you will not take him home! I don't care if the Jones' baby is kept awake all night. Serve it right! The little brat has kept us awake often enough. I'm going to make it pleasant for that poor chap for one evening if I keep the whole town awake. So there!

BETH (*teasingly*). Sure you're not throwing your goodness away? He's a woman-hater, you know.

PEGGY (*crossing, and speaking back over her shoulder*). Stuff! I'll bet my new spring bonnet the poor fellow's just conscious of his deafness and is too considerate of others to—

BRUCE (*looking rather uncomfortable, breaks in*). This picture of you playing tennis, Miss Lee, was it taken here?

PEGGY (*looking over his shoulder; screams*). No—that is—the—lawn—the—the lawn—at home. Do—you—play?

BRUCE. Yes. You see (*apologetically*) that is one of the things I can do without taxing any one's patience and kindness to—to—

PEGGY (*with a pitying glance, in her natural voice*). Oh, the poor fellow! (*Screams again.*) You must come out with Jack some day. (JACK and BETH ap-

plaуд. PEGGY, over her shoulder.) I mean it, every word. And I'll make the whole family be extra nice to him. I haven't been so sorry for anybody for a blue moon. (*Shouts to BRUCE.*) You'll come, won't you?

(*Telephone bell rings.*)

BETH. I'll answer. (*At'phone.*) Hello!....Who?....Oh, that you, Flo?....What?....Oh, no, no! It's just Peggy entertaining a caller.....All right, I'll tell her. Good-bye. (*Hangs up receiver and turns to PEGGY.*) It was Flo Somers, Peggy. She wanted to know whether we were murdering each other or whether the house was on fire.

PEGGY (*heaving a tremendous sigh*). Good heavens, can the whole town hear! Well (*resolutely*), I don't care if they can. But I do think you might come and help me entertain the poor chap.

BETH (*returning to her seat*). Oh, no, Peggy, you don't need any help. You're doing beautifully.

JACK. And Bruce looks *positively* happy! I have not seen him so beaming for weeks.

(*Behind PEGGY's back BRUCE makes threatening signs at JACK.*)

PEGGY (*returning to BRUCE*). Beth and I—are—going—home—on Saturday —

(*Loud pounding heard below; everybody jumps.*)

BETH. Mercy! What's that?

JACK (*with a super-solemn glance around*). Peggy's vociferations must be dislodging the plaster somewhere. (*Roars at BRUCE.*) Did you feel anything?

BETH (*covering her ears*). Oh, Jack! Your voice will jar the house down!

BRUCE (*rising slowly*). Is—is anything the matter?

PEGGY (*quickly*): No, no! Something fell—downstairs—I think.

(*Renewed pounding, and knock at the door.*)

JACK. I'll go, Peggy. (*Exit.* The two girls gaze anxiously at the door. BRUCE watches PEGGY covertly, rubbing his chin contemplatively. JACK reenters, solemnly.) Peggy, the gentleman in the flat below presents his compliments, per the broomstick on the ceiling and the janitor at the door—and could you be a little quieter. His wife has a bad headache.

(BETH turns hastily away to hide her mirth. The two men watch PEGGY.)

PEGGY (with a deep sigh). This is awful! But—I don't care. They'll have to bear it. Mr. Harrington is my guest and I'm sorrier for him than I am for them. I will not have his feelings hurt. Jack, he must never know about this.

JACK (enthusiastically hugging her). You're the best ever, Peggy. Any duffer ought to be able to see that. (*Shouts at BRUCE.*) Miss Stuart wants to show you her butterfly book, Bruce. (To BETH.) Trot it out, Beth. Where's the stuff for the spread, Peggy? You're going to feed us, aren't you?

PEGGY. Why, of course. Come into the kitchen. (To BETH.) Be nice to the poor chap, Beth. [*Exit.*]

JACK (following her, stops at the door, and turns. In low voice). Well, how about it, Harrington?

BRUCE (same tone). She's a darling. But she'll never forgive me.

JACK. Oh, yes, she will, and you're converted already. But keep your ears open still. [*Exit to kitchen.*]

BRUCE (anxiously). Will she, do you think?

BETH. Of course. Peg is a darling. But s-sh! Here she comes.

Enter JACK first, pushing a tea-wagon, followed by PEGGY, who carries a chafing-dish. BRUCE jumps up to take it from her.

PEGGY (shouts). Thank you.

JACK (taking the chafing-dish from BRUCE). Never you mind about this, Bruce. I'm assistant cook and bottle-washer in this establishment. You go and sit down

and listen—listen to Miss Stuart on Butterflies. (BRUCE seats himself beside BETH again. They pretend to be looking at the book, but both listen to the conversation over the tea-wagon. JACK slices cheese.) Well, Peggy, how do you like Harrington, barring his deafness, of course?

PEGGY (*busy with the lamp of the chafing-dish*). Very much. (*With a swift glance at BRUCE.*) He's very good-looking.

(BETH shows BRUCE by signs that she agrees with PEGGY. He squirms.)

JACK. That's no dream. Only trouble is he knows it too well.

PEGGY (*pausing in her work, with spoon poised in the air*). Why, Jack Webster!

JACK (*calmly*). Well, it's true. He is good-looking. He is smart—smartest man in our class, bar none. But he knows it and he wants everybody else to know it too. Has the big head, in fact.

PEGGY (*indignantly*). Why, Jack, how can you talk so of a friend, and before his face, too?

JACK (*in surprised tone*). Why, he can't hear me, you know. He—hi, look out there, Peggy, you're burning the butter!

PEGGY (*stirring vigorously*). He can't hear you! As if that made any difference! Really, Jack, I didn't think you were that kind of man—one thing to a person's face and another behind his back. It's *too* disgusting!

JACK (*to BRUCE, in his ordinary tone*). Hear that, Bruce?

BRUCE (*coming forward*). Yes, I heard, and I'm convinced I've been a fool.

JACK. Hear that, Peggy?

PEGGY (*stands open-mouthed, staring from one to the other, the plate of cheese in one hand, the big spoon in the other*). Why—why, he heard you!

JACK (*laughing*). Oh, yes, he heard me. You see, Peggy, it was a joke, after all, his deafness. He has always said that all girls were alike, sweet to a fellow's face but horrid behind his back, or when they thought he

couldn't hear. I undertook to prove to him, through you, that he was all wrong. And—hi, look out, Peggy, you're spilling the cheese!

BRUCE (*drops on his knees to pick up the cheese, but looks up at PEGGY first*). Can you forgive me, since you certainly have converted me? Jack told me that if ever I saw *you* it would be all up with my theories, and he was absolutely right.

PEGGY (*giving him a playful whack with the big spoon*). Oh, hurry up and pick up that cheese! The butter's burning. It was horrid of you, but —

JACK (*joyfully slapping BRUCE on the back*). Oh, but me no buts, as our friend Shakespeare says somewhere! You've worked a miracle, Peggy, you've "Converted Bruce."

(*As the curtain falls BRUCE is seen at the tea-wagon stirring, while PEGGY turns the sliced cheese into the chafing-dish; and JACK and BETH silently clasp hands behind them.*)

CURTAIN

A PAGEANT OF HISTORY

A Entertainment for either Indoor or Out-of-Door
Performance

By Walter Ben Hare

Fifteen males, nine females by doubling, and has been given on a large scale with one hundred and thirty-eight men and two hundred and ten women. Eighteen males and twenty females is an average number. Costumes, historical; scenery, either elaborate or none at all, as desired. Plays a full evening. A very easy and effective scheme for a pageant illustrating the progress of our race in history, with full directions for economical costuming and simple production. Adapted for production by any one, anywhere, with good effect. Has been produced repeatedly and is perfectly practical. Strongly recommended for school exhibitions or for a lawn entertainment.

Price, 25 cents

OUTLINE FOR PROGRAMMES

SCENE 1. Ancient Britain. "The Coming of the Cross." Drama in blank verse with hymns and march movements.

SCENE 2. Medieval England. "Bold Robin Hood." Comic Opera with Folk Dances.

SCENE 3. *Part 1.*—"The Landing of the Pilgrims." Tableau with reading.
Part 2.—"The White Man's Foot." Dramatic Indian scene.
Part 3.—"A Song of Thanksgiving." Pilgrim song service.

SCENE 4. *Part 1.*—"The Spirit of Seventy-Six." Tableau with song.
Part 2.—"A Colonial Garden Party." Historical characters in the Minuet. Petite Comedy.

SCENE 5. *Part 1.*—"The Days of '61." Battle scene with music.
Part 2.—"Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg."

SCENE 6. "America Triumphant." Song and Tableau.

SALLY LUNN

A Comedy in Two Acts

By Gladys Ruth Bridgham

Three males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, one interior. Plays one and a half hours. Mrs. Randolph (Sally), having married a man with children of about her own age, is taken on her first encounter with them for a girl friend of her "kid" son, who is in the secret, and in this character wins a popularity that was denied her. Very clever and all characters first class. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

THE SCOUT MASTER

A Comedy-Drama in Three Acts

By Walter Ben Hare

Ten male characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, an exterior, the same for all three acts. Plays two hours. Simon Trimmer, a crooked lawyer, imposes upon Mr. Meredith, the Scout Master, as his lost son, Billy Piper, a boy tramp. Billy, under the influence of The Boy Scouts, becomes incapable of continuing the deception, and confesses the fraud just as it is shown that he really is what he has pretended to be. A capital play, introducing songs, drills and all sorts of characteristic stunts with lots of fun. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

BILLY PIPER, *a boy tramp.*

MR. MEREDITH, *the Scout Master.*

SIMON TRIMMER, *a crooked lawyer.*

GAP RINKLE, *owner of the Eagle Hotel.*

ISSACHER TRIP, *the old timer.*

ROOSTER JACKSON, *a black man-of-no-work.*

FREDDY HUNTER, *an adopted son.*

SLIVERS HAMMERHEAD, *fond of dime novels.*

TEDDY SULLIVAN, *the patrol leader.*

HEFTY MULL, *a bad man.*

Boy Scouts, Sailor Lads.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Dooryard of the Eagle Hotel, Bingville, Mo. Father and son.

ACT II.—Same scene. The ghost of a yaller hound pup. Ringing the bell.

ACT III.—Same scene. The Boy Scout Minstrel show. The prodigal son.

HIS METHODIST FOOT

A Farce in One Act

By Vance C. Criss

Three male, six female characters. Costumes, modern; scene, an easy interior. Plays twenty minutes. A book-agent, calling upon Mrs. Jones upon his hateful errand, is mistaken for the new minister, whose first call is expected, and is given entertainment in that character which, for business reasons, he sustains to the best of his ability. What he learns enables him to do a rushing business after he has been found out. Very lively and funny and can be recommended.

Price, 15 cents

SILAS MARNER

A Drama in Four Acts from George Eliot's Novel

By Franklin S. Owen

Nineteen males, four females; six of the men are small and unimportant parts. Costumes, as suggested by the novel; scenery, unimportant. Plays an hour and a half. A capital play wholly suited for the use of schools.

Price, 25 cents

THE ELOPEMENT OF ELLEN

A Farce Comedy in Three Acts by Marie J. Warren. Four males, three females. Costumes, modern; scenery, one interior and one exterior. Plays an hour and a half. A bright and ingenious little play, admirably suited for amateur acting. Written for and originally produced by Wellesley College girls. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

A VIRGINIA HEROINE

A Comedy in Three Acts by Susie G. McGlone. Eleven female characters. Scenery, easy; costumes, modern. Plays one hour and forty-five minutes. Irish and Negro comedy parts, and two character parts; most of the characters young. A very easy and interesting play for girls, well suited for school performance. Romantic interest with lots of comedy.

Price, 25 cents

OUR CHURCH FAIR

A Farcical Entertainment in Two Acts by Jessie A. Kelley. Twelve females. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant. Plays an hour and a quarter. A humorous picture of the planning of the annual church fair by the ladies of the sewing circle. Full of local hits and general human nature, and a sure laugh-producer in any community. Can be recommended.

Price, 25 cents

ALL CHARLEY'S FAULT

A Farce in Two Acts by Anthony E. Wills. Six males, three females. Scenery, an easy interior; costumes, modern. Plays two hours. A very lively and laughable piece, full of action and admirably adapted for amateur performance. Dutch and Negro comedy characters. Plays very rapidly with lots of incident and not a dull moment. Strongly recommended.

Price, 15 cents

HOW THE STORY GREW

An Entertainment for Women's Clubs in One Act by O. W. Gleason. Eight female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant; may be given on a platform without any. Plays forty-five minutes. A very easy and amusing little piece, full of human nature and hitting off a well-known peculiarity of almost any community. Written for middle-aged women, and a sure hit with the audience.

Price, 15 cents

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR

A Comedy Drama in Four Acts by Arthur Lewis Tubbs. Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours. Easy to stage and full of interest. The female parts are the stronger, being exceptionally good. Negro and "hayseed" comedy parts. A very strong dramatic piece. Can be recommended.

Price, 25 cents

EXPENSE NO OBJECT

A Play in Three Acts

By Sam Fanney

Ten males, three females. Scenes, two interiors; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening. Sherman Ash, a rich man about town, seeking excitement, answers the advertisement of a firm of fake detectives with the idea of becoming a sleuth, and also engages them for service at Mrs. Carr's garden party, where Mrs. Peckham, the owner of a celebrated diamond necklace, is to be a guest. The pursuit of this necklace by this pair is complicated by Edwards, another crook already on the ground disguised as the butler, and by the misunderstood tactics of Louise Walker, a guest with whom Ash falls in love. After an exciting series of adventures the necklace is found to be merely paste, virtue in general is rewarded and vice punished, and all ends as it should. Originally produced August 14, 1915, at the Colonial Theatre, Pittsfield, Mass., by Robert Graves, Jr., and the Pittsfield Players. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

SHERMAN ASH, <i>man about town,</i>	BARON PLUM, <i>a second story worker.</i>
<i>Harrison's nephew.</i>	
CHUB TRASK, <i>crook, and fake detective.</i>	REV. FRANCIS MACDONALD, <i>a slipshod clergyman.</i>
EDDIE STONE, <i>crook, and fake detective.</i>	POLICEMAN.
NEEWAH, <i>a Japanese valet.</i>	LOUISE WALKER, <i>Harrison's adopted daughter.</i>
JUDGE HARRISON, <i>uncle to Ash.</i>	MRS. CARR, <i>Carr's wife.</i>
EDWARDS, <i>crook, and fake butler.</i>	BETTY CARR, <i>her daughter.</i>
MR. CARR, <i>a foolish rich man.</i>	

The scene is laid in New York City and Tarrytown.

ELIZABETH'S YOUNG MAN

A Farce in One Act

By Louise Seymour Hasbrouck

One male, three females. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty-five minutes. Elizabeth Orr, a trained nurse, writes her aunt that she is going to take an insane patient to the asylum, and turning up later with her recently acquired fiancé, a natural misunderstanding occurs. Very bright and funny and strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

FREDDIE GOES TO COLLEGE

A Farce in One Act

By Dwight Everett Watkins

Four males, two females. Scene, an interior; costumes, modern. Plays forty minutes. Pa and Ma Hungerford go to pay a visit to Freddie in college, where he has been supposed to be for a long time, only to find that he has joined a circus instead and married an equestrienne. A very funny situation cleverly worked out. Freddie's prosperity reconciles his parents and all ends well. Well recommended.

Price, 25 cents

THE ADVENTURES OF GRANDPA

A Farce in Three Acts

By Walter Ben Hare

Four males, five females. Costumes; modern ; scenery, one interior. Plays a full evening. No royalty. Monte Ray gets word from his grandpa, Otis Hammerhead, from whom he receives an allowance, that he is about to pay him a flying visit. As one of the excuses that he has made to secure an increased income is that he has married, he has to have a " wife " to show, and borrows for the afternoon Lucy, the wife of a close friend, Tod Hunter, much against Tod's will. This answers very well for an hour or so, but when the house is quarantined because the cook has smallpox, and nobody is allowed to leave, matters get a little complicated. A screaming farce introducing dancing, if desired. Very easy, funny and up-to-date, and strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

MONTGOMERY RAY (" MONTE "), *Grandpa's grandson.*

TOD HUNTER, *a young dancing master.*

OTIS HAMMERHEAD (" GRANDPA "), *from Yellow Bud, Ohio.*

OFFICER McCORMACK, *who seen his duty and done it.*

LUCY HUNTER, *our little wife.*

DOROTHY MAY, *just out of college.*

MRS. PANSY HOPSCOTCH, *fair, fat and forty.*

MARIE RIBEAU, *the girl from Paris.*

KLOOMPY, *twelve days from Copenhagen over.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—That afternoon. Grandpa arrives. Quarantined!

ACT II.—That night. Pansy almost breaks out, so does Grandpa. Smallpox !

ACT III.—The next morning. Kloompy spills the beans. Good-bye, Grandpa !

THE BURDEN

A Play in One Act

By Elma Ehrlich Levinger

Three males, one female. Costumes, modern ; scene, an interior. Plays thirty minutes. This admirable little play won the first prize in The Sinai Center Prize Contest, in Chicago, and is strongly recommended to persons in search of high class material. Mendel Rabinowitz, a " good Jew," who has always obeyed " the law," is dependent upon his daughter, Sarah, and his son Isadore, who, emancipated by their " American " bringing up, find the law a burden and seek to be rid of their inconvenient parent, the one to marry, the other to better his business chances. The old man's struggle against these changes and the abhorrent conditions that they involve is intensely dramatic. A play of unusual power and pathos, strongly recommended to the best taste. Particularly recommended to Jewish societies. Royalty, \$5.00 for each performance.

Price, 25 cents

THE SUBMARINE SHELL

A War Play in Four Acts

By Mansfield Scott

Seven males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours. Royalty for amateur performance \$10.00 for one, \$15.00 for two performances. Inspector Malcome Steele, of the U. S. Secret Service, devotes himself in this thrilling play to unravelling the German plots that surround Prof. Middlebrook's submarine shell that is to bring the downfall of the Hun. The battle between his wits and those of "Tom Cloff," the German secret agent, is of absorbing interest. An easy and effective thriller that can be recommended for school performance.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

HANS KRAFT, alias James <i>McGrady.</i>	DETECTIVE ALBERT BRADBURY.
OTTO HERMAN, alias William.	INSPECTOR MALCOME STEELE.
MR. WARREN MIDDLEBROOK.	"TOM CLOFF."
MONSIEUR CHARLES LECLAIR.	MRS. MIDDLEBROOK.
PROFESSOR HENRY WESTER- BERG.	ELEANOR MIDDLEBROOK.
	MARGARET LINDEN.
	DELIA.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. The living-room. August 11, after dinner.

ACT II. Same as Act I. August 12, 1:30 P. M.

ACT III. The private laboratory. That evening, 7:30.

ACT IV. Same as Act III. Later, 10 P. M.

THE AMERICAN IDEA

A Sketch in One Act

By Lily Carthew

Three males, two females. Costumes, modern; scenery, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. Royalty for amateur performance \$5.00. Mignon Goldman, following the American Idea, throws off the parental yoke and marries the man of her choice and not the choice of her parents. She brings home for the parental blessing John Kelly. Abe, her father, is disconsolate at this prospect until he sees John and recognizes in him Yan Kele Operchinsky, rechristened in accordance with "The American Idea." Originally produced at The Peabody Playhouse, Boston. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents.

THE CROWNING OF COLUMBIA

A Patriotic Fantasy in One Act

By Kathrine F. Carlyon

Twenty-five boys and twenty-four girls. Costumes, modern and picturesque. Nothing required in the way of scenery but a platform. Plays half an hour or less. Columbia is approached by the Foresters, the Farmers, the Miners, the Pleasure Seekers, the Ammunition Workers and even the Red Cross Workers, all asking her to be their Queen, but it is only when the Soldiers and the Red Cross Nurses come, asking nothing and giving all, that she yields. Easy, pretty, timely, and strongly recommended. Introduces music.

Price, 25 cents

Plays and Novelties That Have Been "Winners"

	Males	Females	Time	Price	Royalty
The Americana		11	1 1/2 hrs.	25c	Free
Anita's Trial		11	2 "	25c	"
Art Clubs are Trumps		12	1/2 "	25c	"
Behind the Scenes		12	1 1/2 "	25c	"
The Camp Fire Girls		15	2 "	25c	"
A Case for Sherlock Holmes		10	1 1/2 "	25c	"
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Getting the Range		8	1/2 "	25c	"
Her First Assignment		10	1 "	15c	"
Hitty's Service Flag		11	1 1/4 "	25c	"
Joint Owners in Spain		4	1/2 "	25c	\$5.00
A King's Daughter		11	2 "	25c	Free
The Knitting Club Meets		9	1/2 "	25c	"
A Lady to Call		3	1/2 "	15c	"
Leave it to Polly		11	1 1/2 "	25c	"
The Minute Man		13	1 1/2 "	25c	"
Miss Fearless & Co.		10	2 "	25c	"
A Modern Cinderella		16	1 1/2 "	25c	"
Moth-Balls		3	1/2 "	25c	"
Rebecca's Triumph		16	2 "	25c	"
The Thirteenth Star		9	1 1/2 "	25c	"
Twelve Old Maids		15	1 "	25c	"
An Awkward Squad	8		1/4 "	15c	"
The Blow-Up of Algernon Blow	8		1/2 "	15c	"
The Boy Scouts	20		2 "	25c	"
A Close Shave	6		1/2 "	15c	"
The First National Boot	7	2	1 "	15c	"
A Half-Back's Interference	10		3/4 "	15c	"
His Father's Son	14		1 3/4 "	25c	"
The Man With the Nose	8		3/4 "	15c	"
On the Quiet	12		1 1/2 "	25c	"
The People's Money	11		1 3/4 "	25c	"
A Regular Rah! Rah! Boy	14		1 3/4 "	25c	"
A Regular Scream	11		1 3/4 "	25c	"
Schmerecase in School	9		1 "	15c	"
The Scoutmaster	10		2 "	25c	"
The Tramps' Convention	17		1 1/2 "	25c	"
The Turn in the Road	9		1 1/2 "	15c	"
Wanted—A Pitcher	11		1/2 "	15c	"
What They Did for Jenkins	14		2 "	25c	"
Aunt Jerusha's Quilting Party	4	12	1 1/4 "	25c	"
The District School at Blueberry Corners	12	17	1 "	25c	"
The Emigrants' Party	24	10	1 "	25c	"
Miss Prim's Kindergarten	10	11	1 1/2 "	25c	"
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Scenes in the Union Depot	"	"	1 "	25c	"
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The Village Post-Office	22	20	2 "	25c	"
Women in War		11	1/2 "	15c	"

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Plays for Colleges and High Schools

	Males	Females	Time	Price	Royalty
The Air Spy	12	4	1 1/2 hrs.	25c	Special
Bachelor Hall	8	4	2 "	25c	\$5.00
The College Chap	11	7	2 1/2 "	25c	Free
The Colonel's Maid	6	3	2 "	25c	"
Daddy	4	4	1 1/2 "	25c	"
The Deacon's Second Wife	6	6	2 1/2 "	25c	"
The District Attorney	10	6	2 "	25c	"
The Dutch Detective	5	5	2 "	25c	"
An Easy Mark	5	2	1/2 "	15c	"
The Elopement of Ellen	4	3	2 "	25c	"
Engaged by Wednesday	5	11	1 1/2 "	25c	"
The Farmerette		7	2 "	25c	"
For One Night Only	5	4	2 "	15c	"
Hamilton	11	5	2 "	50c	Special
Higbee of Harvard	5	4	2 "	15c	Free
Hitty's Service Flag		11	1 1/4 "	25c	"
The Hoodoo	6	12	2 "	25c	"
The Hurdy Gurdy Girl	9	9	2 "	25c	"
Katy Did	4	8	1 1/2 "	25c	"
Let's Get Married	3	5	2 "	50c	Special
London Assurance	10	3	2 "	15c	Free
Lost a Chaperon	6	9	2 "	25c	"
The Man from Brandon	3	4	1/2 "	15c	"
The Man Who Went	7	3	2 1/2 "	25c	Special
The Man Without a Country	46	5	1 1/2 "	25c	Free
Master Pierre Patelin	4	1	1 1/2 "	50c	"
Me and Otis	5	4	2 "	15c	"
The Minute Man		13	1 1/2 "	25c	"
Mose	11	10	1 1/2 "	15c	"
Mr. Bob	3	4	1 1/2 "	15c	"
Mrs. Briggs of the Poultry Yard	4	7	2 "	25c	"
Nathan Hale	15	4	2 1/2 "	50c	\$10.00
Nephew or Uncle	8	3	2 "	25c	Free
Professor Pepp	8	8	2 1/2 "	25c	"
A Regiment of Two	6	4	2 "	25c	"
The Revenge of Shari-Hot-Su	3	4	1 1/2 "	15c	"
The Rivals	9	5	2 1/2 "	15c	"
The Romancers	5	1	2 "	25c	"
The Rose and the Ring	16	5	1 3/4 "	25c	"
Sally Lunn	3	4	1 1/2 "	25c	"
The School for Scandal	12	4	2 1/2 "	15c	"
She Stoops to Conquer	15	4	2 1/2 "	15c	"
Step Lively	4	10	2 "	25c	"
The Submarine Shell	7	4	2 "	25c	Special
The Thirteenth Star		9	1 1/2 "	25c	Free
The Time of His Life	6	3	2 1/2 "	25c	"
Tommy's Wife	3	5	1 1/2 "	25c	"
The Twig of Thorn	6	7	1 1/2 "	60c	"

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